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Missouri Unemployment Rate Lowest in Over A Year

Missouri's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell to its lowest level in more than a year in January, another sign the state's economic conditions are starting to improve.

The seasonally adjusted rate fell by four-tenths of a point from the revised December figure to 5.1 percent in January, which is the lowest rate since December of 2001 when it was also 5.1 percent. The current rate is also well below the revised average for 2002, which was 5.5 percent.

In addition, Missouri's rate is well below the national seasonally adjusted rate of 5.7 percent and is also lower than the rates in more than half the other states.

Missouri's unadjusted unemployment rate in January was 5.7 percent, compared with a national rate of 6.5 percent. Unadjusted unemployment is typically at its highest in January, when employment in many industries is at seasonal lows.

"This unemployment data for January is certainly good news for Missouri and another indication that our economy is starting to rebound from this recession," said Joseph L. Driskill, director of the Missouri Department of Economic Development. "The size and composition of our workforce is showing new signs of stability and we are becoming more optimistic."

"It is very significant that our unemployment rate remains well below the national average and that we are at a 13 month low. In a short time February numbers will be released and we are hopeful this positive trend will continue."

Fourteen Missouri counties had double-digit unemployment rates with the highest percentages recorded in Stone County (22.8%) and Taney County (20.0%). The lowest unemployment rates in the state were recorded in Boone County (2.1%) and Nodaway County (2.5%).

January unemployment data generally is released later than other months because of normal benchmark revisions that occur at the beginning of the year. In addition, the final data was further delayed as the U.S. Department of Labor has made some major changes in how the data is compiled, such as implementing the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) with the January data.

While Missouri unemployment fell substantially in January, non-farm payrolls continued to report lower employment, according to labor statistics.

About 150,000 Missourians were estimated to have been jobless in January, about 14,000 less than December 2002 and more than 10,000 from January 2002.

Total non-farm payroll employment in the state decreased by 30,300 between December and January, on a seasonally adjusted basis. However, the figure overstates the underlying employment change, because of employment reporting at schools and colleges. Non-instructional personnel at these institutions often do not work during semester break vacations and are not reported on payrolls. January 2003 data apparently captured many schools in this situation, whereas these workers were on payrolls in the comparative months of January and December 2002.

Data are reported for one week during the month, which contains the 12th of the month. Not seasonally adjusted data show educational services employment down by 9,500 in January, while state and local government employment (which includes public schools and colleges) was down by 9,700. Educational employment is expected to return to more-typical levels in February.

Most industry groups, now being further aggregated into "supersectors" for purposes of analysis by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, reported lower employment. The supersectors for which seasonally adjusted employment change was small included financial activities (+400), construction (-400), manufacturing (-900), and leisure and hospitality (-800). Employment in service sectors other than leisure and hospitality and business and education was down by 2,100 jobs. Employment in trade, transportation and utilities decreased by 1,000.

There are a few supersectors for which seasonally adjusted data are not available because a seasonal pattern in the data could not be determined. Not-seasonally-adjusted data show employment decreasing by 13,600 jobs in professional and business services in January. The employment service industry alone accounted for 6,200 of the lost jobs, mostly the result of temporary retail workers being let go at the end of the holiday period. The employment service industry has borne a major brunt of the recession throughout its duration, as businesses in many industries reduced the number of their temporary employees.

Over the past year, employment has fallen by 68,600 jobs, not seasonally adjusted. (Unadjusted data provide the maximum industry detail. Comparison between the same month in two years should not involve a seasonality issue.) Manufacturing employment dropped by 11,300 jobs between January 2002 and January 2003, mostly in the durable goods industries. Construction employment fell by 9,000. Truck transportation employment was down by 1,900 jobs, while air transportation fell by 1,300. Professional and business services employment decreased by 17,300 jobs, spread through many industries. Private educational services employment was down by 7,000, but much of this was probably the result of the temporary drop in January 2003 rather than a trend decrease in employment. Government employment fell by 20,900, mostly in state government (16,500), also affected by the temporary decrease in educational employment.

Some industries experienced over-the-year growth. Leisure and hospitality industries were up by 3,700 jobs, health care and social assistance by 3,100, retail trade by 1,200, and legal services and services to building, each up by 1,000 jobs.

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MISSOURI UNEMPLOYMENT RATES
FOR METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS (MSAs), LABOR MARKET AREAS (LMAs), AND COUNTIES
CURRENT MONTH (JANUARY 2003), PREVIOUS TWO MONTHS (NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2002), AND YEAR AGO (JANUARY 2002)

	JAN 2003	DEC 2002	NOV 2002	JAN 2002		JAN 2003	DEC 2002	NOV 2002	JAN 2002
U.S. (not seasonally adjusted)	6.5	5.7	5.7	6.3	Atchison	3.6	2.8	2.8	4.1
MISSOURI	5.7	5.4	5.3	6.0	Audrain	5.9	5.2	5.0	4.8
ST. LOUIS MSA	5.7	5.5	5.6	5.8	Barton	4.6	4.3	4.2	4.1
Franklin	6.4	5.9	5.4	6.6	Bates	8.3	7.8	7.3	7.0
Jefferson	6.1	5.5	5.2	5.7	Benton	9.4	7.9	7.3	10.6
Lincoln	6.6	6.0	5.5	8.2	Caldwell	8.7	7.7	7.0	8.7
St. Charles	4.0	3.9	3.8	4.8	Carroll	6.4	5.9	5.8	5.3
St. Louis County	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.6	Cedar	7.6	7.9	7.0	6.2
Warren	6.8	5.8	5.8	8.6	Chariton	7.3	7.0	7.1	7.3
St. Louis City	8.6	9.1	9.5	9.2	Clark	9.0	7.9	6.5	10.0
KANSAS CITY MSA	5.6	5.6	5.8	5.8	Cooper	4.6	4.5	4.1	5.3
Cass	5.1	4.8	4.6	4.7	Crawford	8.4	7.4	6.6	8.4
Clay	4.2	4.3	4.2	3.9	Dade	4.4	4.4	4.3	5.3
Clinton	5.8	5.7	5.5	5.4	Dallas	6.7	6.7	6.1	8.8
Jackson	6.3	6.6	6.7	6.0	Daviess	6.1	5.6	5.0	6.0
Lafayette	5.4	4.9	4.9	5.6	DeKalb	6.2	5.3	5.0	5.7
Platte	4.0	4.2	4.2	3.9	Dent	8.7	8.0	7.8	9.2
Ray	5.4	5.2	4.9	5.0	Douglas	11.3	10.3	10.4	14.5
SPRINGFIELD MSA	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.7	Dunklin	9.1	8.4	7.6	8.6
Christian	5.9	5.0	4.9	5.4	Gasconade	6.5	6.2	5.0	7.3
Greene	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.4	Gentry	3.6	3.5	3.7	4.9
Webster	4.3	5.0	5.2	5.4	Grundy	5.8	5.0	4.6	5.8
JOPLIN MSA	5.3	5.5	5.6	4.8	Harrison	5.6	5.6	4.9	5.2
Jasper	5.0	4.9	5.1	4.8	Henry	6.8	6.4	6.2	7.4
Newton	5.9	6.5	6.6	4.8	Hickory	10.6	8.9	7.7	9.8
COLUMBIA MSA	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.3	Holt	6.1	4.6	4.5	4.7
Boone	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.3	Howard	4.8	4.8	4.9	5.4
ST. JOSEPH MSA	6.2	5.7	5.8	6.5	Iron	9.7	9.7	9.9	9.7
Andrew	5.4	5.1	4.5	6.1	Johnson	4.1	3.8	4.0	4.1
Buchanan	6.3	5.9	6.1	6.6	Knox	4.1	3.6	3.0	5.4
ADAIR-SCHUYLER LMA	3.8	3.1	2.5	4.6	Laclede	6.1	5.7	5.7	7.5
Adair	3.3	2.8	2.3	4.2	Lewis	5.6	5.1	3.7	4.6
Schuyler	7.0	5.1	3.7	7.6	Linn	10.8	10.4	10.8	9.4
BUTLER-CARTER-RIPLEY LMA	6.2	6.3	5.7	6.7	Livingston	4.4	4.1	4.1	4.1
Butler	5.8	5.8	5.4	6.2	McDonald	6.1	13.1	6.5	5.8
Carter	7.4	7.4	6.4	8.3	Macon	7.5	6.2	5.4	9.1
Ripley	7.3	7.7	6.7	7.5	Madison	8.8	8.6	8.1	10.8
CAMDEN-MILLER LMA	10.6	8.5	7.1	11.8	Mercer	7.6	7.2	6.7	4.7
Camden	10.4	8.3	7.1	11.5	Monroe	8.1	7.3	6.9	8.1
Miller	11.0	8.9	7.2	12.3	Montgomery	7.2	6.4	5.6	8.5
CAPE GIRARDEAU-SCOTT-NEW MADRID LMA	6.0	5.7	5.5	6.5	Morgan	9.8	8.4	7.5	10.9
Bollinger	7.0	6.0	5.6	10.3	Nodaway	2.5	2.1	1.7	2.1
Cape Girardeau	4.3	3.9	3.9	4.5	Ozark	7.8	6.8	6.1	9.1
Mississippi	8.1	8.7	8.5	10.0	Pemiscot	11.7	10.8	10.6	10.9
New Madrid	12.7	11.0	10.6	9.3	Perry	3.8	3.1	3.1	3.9
Scott	5.6	5.7	5.5	6.9	Pettis	6.2	5.6	5.4	8.7
COLE-CALLAWAY-MONITEAU LMA	4.0	3.6	3.4	4.0	Pike	5.6	5.1	4.9	7.0
Callaway	4.3	3.9	3.4	4.3	Polk	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.7
Cole	3.4	3.0	3.1	3.4	Pulaski	5.2	4.9	4.4	6.6
Moniteau	4.6	4.1	3.6	4.5	Putnam	7.7	5.9	4.1	5.3
Osage	5.4	5.2	4.5	6.0	Randolph	5.4	4.6	4.5	6.4
HOWELL-OREGON-SHANNON LMA	5.9	5.7	5.1	6.5	Reynolds	12.4	11.1	9.4	10.4
Howell	5.5	5.3	4.7	6.1	St. Clair	6.7	6.0	5.3	6.0
Oregon	4.4	4.4	3.7	5.7	Ste. Genevieve	6.4	5.3	5.0	6.7
Shannon	9.5	8.9	8.4	9.1	Saline	5.2	5.4	5.2	6.9
LAWRENCE-BARRY LMA	5.9	5.4	4.9	6.1	Scotland	5.1	4.3	3.6	7.7
Barry	6.4	6.1	5.4	6.3	Shelby	7.3	5.9	4.5	9.2
Lawrence	5.4	4.8	4.4	6.0	Stoddard	7.6	7.0	6.2	9.2
MARION-RALLS LMA	5.7	5.2	4.9	6.1	Stone	22.8	8.6	7.2	23.8
Marion	5.4	4.9	4.9	6.1	Sullivan	13.3	8.0	3.9	4.7
Ralls	6.3	6.0	5.0	6.1	Taney	20.0	5.2	4.3	22.1
PHELPS-MARIES LMA	4.1	3.8	3.3	4.4	Texas	8.8	8.1	7.8	9.8
Maries	4.9	4.5	3.6	5.9	Vernon	5.0	4.8	4.7	5.4
Phelps	4.0	3.6	3.2	4.0	Wayne	13.2	12.7	11.4	14.3
ST. FRANCOIS-WASHINGTON LMA	9.1	8.5	8.3	9.4	Worth	4.8	3.5	4.4	5.9
St. Francois	8.3	7.9	7.9	8.5	Wright	7.5	7.8	8.0	11.3
Washington	11.4	10.1	9.4	11.5					

NOTE: DATA FOR COUNTIES WITHIN MSAs/LMAs ARE DISAGGREGATED FROM MSA/LMA TOTALS.

NOTE: SUBSTATE AREA DATA FOR 2002 HAVE BEEN REVISED BUT ARE PROVISIONAL: NOT YET OFFICIAL AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

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